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**COLORADO
WORKS**
Earning, Learning, Thriving

cdhs
Colorado Department
of Human Services
people who help people

DIRECT FROM THE DIRECTOR...

With the recent TANF extension and likelihood of reauthorization at some point in the future, I am moved to think about the Four Federal Purposes of TANF. In spite of changes over the past 15 years, these principles continue to be the foundation of our program. Specifically, counties may use TANF funds in any manner "reasonably calculated to accomplish the purposes of TANF" as stated below:

1. Providing assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or the homes of relatives;
2. Ending the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and, marriage.
3. Preventing and reducing out-of-wedlock pregnancies and to establish annual goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and
4. Encouraging the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.



As you can see we are much more than a "participate in work activities for a grant" program. How well does your program translate these purposes into operational objectives and practice? As I see it, to effectively respond to these purposes, a program's services must be integrated and data driven with business processes streamlined for efficiency. Successful programs are collaborative in nature; they actively engage public and private community providers, other state agencies as well as education and vocational training entities. Real partnerships must exist with the business community and Workforce Centers to develop participant skills that are aligned with the needs of local labor markets. These programs further define participant and program success using a variety of factors including specific and measurable outcomes tied to family safety, strengthening and stability. Services and policies are client centered and acknowledge the many challenges that participants face. A strong emphasis is placed on developing screening tools,

strengthening the assessment process, and ensuring the development of individualized case plans built on the strengths inherent in even the most challenged participant. No, in these programs, TANF is not viewed solely as a funding stream, but as a means to an end ~ with 4 purposes.

Levetta Love

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COLORADO WORKS IN ACTION!

This month's success story comes from Julie Quihuiz of Larimer County. Julie first met Aubry in December, 2010. A single parent with three children (ages 8, 11, and 12), Aubry was attending Front Range Community College (FRCC), pursuing an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree in Business when she was granted a training slot that allowed her to count school hours as her core work activity. This was one of many pivotal points along Aubry's path to attaining economic security.

Overcoming Challenges!

Like many Colorado Works participants, Aubry faced multiple challenges in reaching her goals. She had already clocked a lot of time on TANF in another state while extracting herself from a violent relationship, spending time in a domestic violence shelter as well as fighting a felony charge brought against her because she was with the children's father when he committed a crime. Before moving to Colorado, Aubry's TANF experience provided little to no access to internships, supportive services, or job-readiness activities (such as resume-writing or interviewing); she was never able to find a job that paid more than minimum wage. With her TANF clock running low, Aubry arrived in Larimer County. Finally, she was offered the tools she needed to achieve her self-sufficiency goals: an internship, transportation assistance, child care, and a TANF extension.

While completing her degree, Aubry gained practical experience and increased her marketability through a three-month internship with the Larimer County DHS Office of Long Term Care (OLTC), facilitated and supported by Colorado Works. That initial internship turned into a year-long paid internship. The internship allowed her to get a foot in the door and demonstrate her employability. Five months before her internship ended, Aubry was hired by the OLTC as a permanent, full-time Case Aide. She now has a career that not only pays more than minimum wage, but is useful and relevant to her ultimate career goal in social work...all because she was offered a chance and a short-term internship.

In addition to obtaining full-time work, Aubry has graduated with her AAS degree and is planning to pursue a BA in Social Work. Additionally, she now has a clean background following a judge's order to seal her criminal record. Aubry has been accepted into the Zonta Club Mentoring program through FRCC's Single Parent Program and is currently transitioning off benefits. She is well on her way! When asked her if we could use her story, Aubry graciously agreed and wrote the following:

"I have no family for support and no friends who are on the same path. My coaches and trainers were like a family to me because I knew they cared and wanted to see me succeed. Because of their care and concern, along with hard work...I am well on my way to becoming 100% self-sufficient and happy! I will never be able to re-pay the debt I feel I owe to my coaches, trainers, and Larimer County. Now, I strive to become one of the very people who helped me. I will be able to pay the debt forward and become that for another single mother."

We know there are many stories of success all across Colorado...and Colorado Works wants to share your success story! Please submit your story to Michelle Sykes at Michelle.Sykes@state.co.us before November 1st.

IN TIME, ON TIME

With a very busy month behind us we are excited to look forward to the many changes the Program Integrity section has in store. First, counties continue to excel in complying with "In Time" for new applications, processing them at 98.5% timely. That is commendable!

So what is next? With January quickly approaching, each county must ask how you will meet the 95% timely processing goal for redeterminations. Additionally, the Colorado Works staff will be asking the Large 10 counties to provide detailed Action Plans for how they will meet this important milestone. We will also continue to reach out to counties and work directly with those that are not meeting the 95% timely processing for redeterminations to incorporate business process changes.



Our hope is to increase our focus on the "On Time" aspect of service delivery, identifying how counties can meet the needs of Colorado families and provide benefits not within 45 days, but on time based on the family's need. We will be working with counties in the very near future on developing direct strategies that can move us in that direction, providing benefits to families within 7 days for 95% of our families within three years.

Colorado Works is excited to announce the following two large counties exceeded the 95% timely rate for their new applications and RRRs in the month of September. Jefferson County processed 131 new applications at 99.24% timeliness. Their staff was able to process 60 RRRs and made 96.67% timely for the month. They made significant gains from the month prior of 84.34%. Weld County processed 129 new applications at 99.22% timeliness. Their staff was able to process 35 RRRs and made 97.14% timely for the month. With some hard work they were able to jump from 89.80% the month prior. Focusing on process improvements and ensuring that the focus is on providing quick service makes a lasting impact in their customers' lives. Congratulations Jeffco and Weld!

MSR Update

In early September CDHS Colorado Works staff became aware that Monthly Status Reports (MSRs) were not sent to clients timely. We worked closely with OIT and our vendor, Deloitte, as well as county staff, to resolve the situation. Here is a final communication regarding the delayed MSR situation:

1st Fail to File Batch Job - On 9/19/2012, the batch job ran successfully. A "1st Fail to File notice" was sent to 6,818 cases out of 14,035 total cases. By 9/30/2012, 2461 MSRs remained unprocessed.

What does the future hold? October's MSRs have already been sent. On 09/20/2012, we sent 14,092 MSRs out; your county is probably already receiving some of those MSRs back.

Drum roll please...

The re-design work of the Workforce Development (WFD) track is underway and will prove to be a vast improvement over all of the drill down requirements of the current track. Ah, to no longer be a carpenter but to have time to provide great case management!

One goal of the re-design is to streamline data entry by merging various windows and tabs into a smooth, logical work flow. Another goal is to allow for entering client outcomes for reporting and performance management purposes.

A WFD Workgroup began defining what works and what doesn't in the current track in early September and will continue to meet as the project moves forward. A request for additional help went out to CCUG members asking for folks well versed in the WFD Track for testing assistance and evaluation of on-going software development. The bulk of the work requirements will include a one-hour meeting, two full days of testing, and an hour-long software demonstration. The schedule is bi-weekly so that minimizes the workload intensity.

So don't delay! Be an important influence on what we implement. Be the first on your block to see what is coming in February. Please contact Richard Steffes (richard.steffes@state.co.us) or 303.866.5968, if you are able to commit to this very important project. After all you know best what improvements are beneficial.

A monthly newsletter, "In the Wires" will be sent out toward the end of the month to keep everyone up-to-date regarding where the project is and what the re-designed "Work for us" Development Track will look like.



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PREVENTING UNINTENDED PREGNANCIES

What's happening in adolescent sexual health?

So what does Domestic Violence Awareness Month have to do with adolescent sexual health? More than most realize. Violence in the home negatively impacts the entire family, not just the victim. After all, where do we first experience and learn about relationships? Whether healthy or unhealthy, the reality is that often what we learn from the adults in our life during childhood is how we treat others and expect to be treated. Let's take a quick look at teen dating violence and pregnancy:

- As many as 2/3 of adolescents who become pregnant were sexually or physically abused some time in their lives.
- Approximately 1 in 3 teens report abuse in a romantic relationship, including emotional and verbal.

Sadly, youth experience a wide range of violence in their relationships to include, dating violence, bullying, sexual coercion, reproductive coercion, birth control sabotage, and sexual assault. Being a knowledgeable, askable, trustworthy adult is the first step in helping youth to feel safe to get the support they need.

To learn more about how you can take ACTION and learn tips to help talk to youth about dating violence and healthy relationships, visit <http://www.ccadv.org/>. Everyone can get help at the National Dating Violence Helpline by calling 1-866-331-9474, texting "loveis" directly to 77054, or visiting www.loveisrespect.org, which includes live chat.



Read All About It!

Our partners at Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE) are pleased to release **Youth Sexual Health in Colorado: A Call to Action!** Due to the need for a clear statewide public health message regarding youth sexual health, the Call to Action is Colorado's effort to address youth sexual health as a holistic issue in young people's lives beyond preventing unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. Input for the call to action plan was gathered through community conversations, youth and parent informal focus groups, youth interviews, and a state-wide community survey.



We were excited to participate in this and support such great work! [Learn more here](#). We hope you can help spread the word and join us for the Denver Launch of the Call to Action taking place Saturday, October 27, 2012 at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science (2001 Colorado Blvd.; Denver, CO 80205) from 10:30am – 1:30pm. *The event is free, but space is limited, so [RSVP today](#).*

Adolescent Health Resources

(Provided by *Advocates for Youth*)

October also happens to be "Let's Talk" Month, a national public education campaign celebrated in October and coordinated by Advocates for Youth. Let's Talk Month is an opportunity for schools, community agencies, religious institutions, businesses, media, parent groups and health providers to plan programs and activities which encourage parent/child communication about sexuality. Download the [Let's Talk Month Planning Guidebook](#) as well as additional posters and materials. Check out [all available resources for the month](#).



PREP Highlight

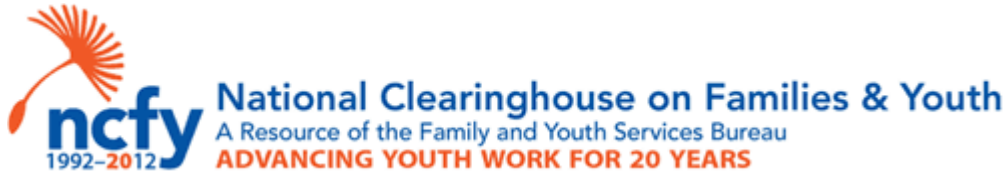
September marked the end of our first year of the grant. First and foremost, we extend a gigantic THANK YOU to Denver, Garfield, and Huerfano Counties and all of our PREP partners for an amazing first year of PREP! It is truly an honor to work with such dedicated, passionate, and talented colleagues! As we wrap up the first year, compile our Federal semi-annual report, and move into more solid implementation of PREP in year 2, we want to begin sharing highlights of the fantastic work being done! Stay tuned next month for our featured PREP funded site!

Making the Connection to TANF

This is a new aspect of the newsletter that will provide resources and information on helping youth become the self-sufficient, successful adults of tomorrow. As most know, teen pregnancy can significantly limit and/or prevent the long-term economic stability.

Focusing on Outcomes for Youth: Self-Sufficiency

The Family and Youth Services Bureau believes the most crucial outcomes for runaway and homeless youth include well-being, permanent connections, safety and self-sufficiency. In this issue of The Exchange, they focus on ways to achieve and improve self-sufficiency for runaway and homeless youth. [Read more...](#)



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MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS For our Colorado Works Families

Background

In light of National Health Education Week this month, we would like to encourage counties to provide supportive services and referrals to TANF-eligible families who are in need of mental health services. Treatment services are frequently difficult to access and an overwhelming number of people with mental illnesses do not get the essential treatment they need. TANF funds are flexible and allow counties to connect families with appropriate providers when issues are identified.

Mental illnesses aren't rare; they are widespread and affect persons of any age, race, religion, or income. They are not the result of lack of character, personal weakness, or poor upbringing, even though a social stigma still exists in our culture. Educating yourself on this matter is so important to the job you do and the support you provide to those accessing Colorado Works assistance. Mental illnesses are real health conditions, and can disturb a person's emotional and psychological well-being and ability to function in society or to cope with ordinary demands of everyday life. Students with mental disorders, for example, have one of the highest dropout rates of any disability group. Mental illnesses usually strike individuals in the prime of their lives, and without treatment, consequences are staggering and lead to other barriers we see often, including unemployment, unnecessary disability, substance abuse, homelessness, incarceration, and even suicide, one of the leading causes of death among adolescents.

Mental health problems are treatable. Early referrals for treatment can result in more positive outcomes. In most cases, conditions improve with treatments and oftentimes person who have been diagnosed are able to recover completely and can experience relief from their symptoms by actively participating in a treatment plan.

Counties Can Make a Difference

Addressing mental health concerns can help participants attain and maintain employment, establish healthy families, keep children in their homes, and form safe and wholesome relationships. Therefore it is vital to address mental health during basic and ongoing assessments. Useful screening tools, communication with your participants and good observation skills are important, since signs are not always obvious and recognizing disorders

can be challenging. Some counties have outlined in county policies promising practices for providing appropriate and necessary supports including: conducting interviews in confidential environments, monitoring participants' progress and goals with mental health professionals, arranging home visit intervention when necessary, having mental health professionals on-staff and available as needed, using not-job-ready designation when the most urgent need is to stabilize a mental health situation, establishing contracts with mental health service providers, and paying for mental health services through supportive services/other assistance.

A participant's IRC should be tailored to their needs in order to lessen the impact of their illness and give them a sense of accomplishment and independence. A wide range of supports, including transportation and meaningful engagement in the program, can be components of a treatment plan and can contribute to overall long-term health and wellness, including mental health recovery and/or personal success.

The following link contains information on accessing mental health services through Colorado's Public mental health system, including the Colorado Department of Human Services, which contracts with community mental health centers to provide those services to non-Medicaid recipients.

<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDHS-BehavioralHealth/CBON/1251581450094>

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SPOTLIGHT ON COLORADO WORKS STAFF

Richard Steffes

Richard Steffes has been with the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) for more than 11 years. He began his career with CDHS in the Division of Child Support Enforcement helping to design, train, implement, and support automated enforcement collection tools.

Richard accepted a position in the Division of Colorado Works in October 2007 as Training Coordinator with the responsibilities of managing state wide training efforts of the division. Currently, he is managing the CBMS WFD track changes to streamline work flow for those using the track daily and to serve our participants better through improved technology.



Richard moved to Colorado in November 2000 to begin practicing family counseling, after earning his Masters of Social Work from the University of Michigan. He soon learned that working with mandated clients is much more difficult than anything he encountered in his previous life, even spending five years in a medium level security prison.

Prior to "heading west old man", Richard worked as an IT manager, Business System Analyst, Trainer, and even a forklift driver (which ended with him ripping off a garage door and, on another occasion, falling through the wooden bed of a dilapidated truck he was attempting to unload).

Richard has a wonderful son who earned his Masters in Nuclear Engineering and is now seen glowing in his work with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. In his free time, Richard enjoys hiking, snowshoeing and canning THE best pickles man, and woman, have eaten.

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TRIVIA

Who was the first African-American woman to reach the Colorado gold fields?

[Answer](#)

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A NEW WEBSITE FOR ASCEND AT THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

Ascend at the Aspen Institute is unveiling their new website, a virtual hub for leaders working on solutions and innovations to move families toward economic mobility. Ascend is based on a simple but powerful idea: two-generation approaches, which focus on creating opportunities for and addressing needs of parents and children together, hold great promise and potential. Over the past 18 months, Ascend has engaged with and learned with the field through targeted research, national roundtables, and community-based learning trips.

The time is ripe for bold approaches that foster new collaboration across sectors to address poverty. Take a special look at the Ascend Fellows and the Aspen ThinkXChange!

Please share the site with friends and colleagues, follow us on Twitter @aspenascend, and send in your best ideas that help to increase the economic security, educational success, and social capital of vulnerable parents and children.

www.ascendprogram.org



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FAMILY LEADERSHIP TRAINING INSTITUTE (FLTI)

The Colorado Family Leadership Training Institute is taking applications now at www.ColoradoFamilyLeadership.com. Applications are due November 2, 2012. Interviews will be scheduled in December 2012.

Classes start in January 2013 in the following counties:

- Adams (monolingual Spanish only)
- Arapahoe/Douglas
- Eagle
- Larimer
- Mesa
- Montezuma/Dolores
- Denver/Aurora (near Children's hospital)



The FLTI curriculum is a proven curriculum that inspires, trains, and empowers individuals to become effective leaders and change agents on behalf of children, youth, and families. This opportunity is **only offered to 25 participants** who are screened and selected based on their availability and readiness. Consideration is also given to how their participation will enhance diversity, strength, and learning for the group as a whole. The FLTI course is offered free of charge! In return, you commit your time and a written community project that reflects your passion.

Who should apply? Parents, teen parents, grandparents, other family members, young adults, foster parents, community members, and others who wish to improve the lives of children and

families in communities.

The 20-week FLTI curriculum is based on the premise that the family is a child's first and most important teacher. Family members are also the best advocates for children and communities. Community leaders including parents, youth, and family members, can be effective when they speak out on issues and inform policy makers, the media, and the community, about the needs of their members. FLTI offers stimulating educational sessions to boost leadership skills of participants in addressing areas of concern such as accessible child healthcare, the education achievement gap, neighborhood safety, and the significance of parental involvement. Together, class participants will emerge as strong leaders and advocates for all children and their families.

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COUNTY ADMINISTRATORS MEETING

The Colorado Works County Administrators meeting will be held on **October 23, 2012** from 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM.

[Register Now](#)

Location

Arapahoe County DHS **(please note change in location)**
14980 Alameda Drive
CentrePoint Plaza
Columbine Valley Room, 3rd Floor
Aurora, CO 80012

Meeting Room

<http://cohuman.adobeconnect.com/countyadmin/>

Teleconference Number: 1.866.244.8528

Participant Code: 107020#

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TRAINING AND EVENTS SCHEDULE

County Administrators Meeting Colorado Works Basics

October 23, 2012

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

[Register Now](#)

Please indicate your lunch preference when you register.

Location

Arapahoe County DHS
(please note change in location)
14980 Alameda Drive
CentrePoint Plaza
Columbine Valley Room, 3rd Floor
Aurora, CO 80012

Meeting Room

<http://cohuman.adobeconnect.com/countyadmin/>

November 6 - 7, 2012

8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

CDHS State Office
Garden Level Conference Room
1575 Sherman Street
Denver, CO 80203

[Additional Information and Registration](#)

Colorado Works Webinars: In the Weeds with Colorado Works Policy

November 13, 2012

Teleconference Number:
1.866.244.8528

Participant Code:
107020#

December 11, 2012

Webinar
Location: <http://cohuman.adobeconnect.com/cw-webinars/>

Teleconference Number:
1.866.502.8312

Participant Code:
444488#

Rule Rewrite Training

October 24, 2012
Prowers County Dept. of Human Services
1001 S. Main Street
Mezzanine Meeting Room
Lamar, CO 81052

[Register Now](#)

October 31, 2012
Denver County DHS
Denver East Building
3815 Steele St.
Denver, CO 80205

Registration closed due to volume.

Did you miss the training? Please check the [Colorado Works website](#) for future updates.

Save the Date



March 7-8, 2013
Hyatt Regency Denver Tech Center

[Additional Information](#)

Training Cancellations and Changes

Knowledge Transfer (KT) Call
October 17, 2012

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TRIVIA ANSWER

Clara Brown is reportedly the first black woman to cross the plains during the Gold Rush. Brown was born a slave in Virginia in 1800. At nine years of age, she and her mother were sent to Kentucky. By the age of eighteen she married and subsequently gave birth to four children. At 35 years of age, she was sold by her owner at auction and separated from her husband and children. Freed by her third owner in 1859, she came to Denver by working as a cook on a wagon train in exchange for her transportation.

From the [Colorado Women's Hall of Fame](#).

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